

A. Feature on the River

By Calvin E. Morse
Mays

1856.

"
A wise physician, skilled our wounds to heal
Is more than armies to the public weal."

Homer.

So desirable as it to understand the diagnosis
of disease yet physicians differ so much,
and arrive at conclusions so directly opposite
to each other, that it is not surprising that
the public in general should lose confidence
in them, and come to a conclusion that physi-
cians are not all sufficiently informed upon
the subject, To state a person has such a com-
-plaint because they have certain feelings, is rat-
-her presuming, the same feelings may attend a
disease of various organs, To know how to de-
-cide with accuracy in regard to the disease of
any one organ, it is necessary to be acquainted
with the primary cause, as no effect can trans-
-pire without a cause, This requires an intimate

acquaintance with the human organization, it is known that animal matter is the offspring of vegetable, Food forms blood, blood forms bone, muscle, nerve, &c. &c. which are decomposing and wasting away as fast as formed, Now if the blood forms the entire human organization, is it not reasonable to conclude that if the blood be of a healthy character the whole system must be equally so? What renders the blood unhealthy, or what may be the cause of disease in any part of the system? The blood circulates with great velocity, All the blood contained in the body passes through the heart at least five times an hour!

There are two distinct characters of blood, the arterial and venous; one circulates in the arteries, the other in the veins, The arterial blood is that which is prepared in the

lungs, to be distributed throughout the system, for the support of the solids. The venous blood is the arterial which has become exhausted of its animating principles, and is collected into the veins from the capillary vessels of the skin and the mucous membranes, where it is deposited from the extremities of the arteries. The arteries are exhaling and the veins absorbing vessels. The various ^{substances} momentarily produced by the decomposition of all parts of the system, are therefore in greater or less proportions absorbed into the venous blood, giving it that dark color sometimes of a thick glutinous or viscid consistency, which causes it to circulate sluggishly, often accumulating in parts of the system where the vessels are large, or in organs which have become weakened.

Many are afflicted with headache, pain in the temples, dizziness and heat, because the blood is thick and accumulates in ^{the} head; at the same time the feet may ^{be} cold. Sometimes it accumulates in limbs and enlargement of the veins ensue, called varicous. Numbness, palsy, apoplexy, palpitation, enlargement, drowsiness, inactivity, weakness of the muscular system, and nervous Rheumatism, pains in the limbs and other parts, all owe their origin to this condition of blood. Where one organ is weaker than another the blood passes more sluggishly through it, and accumulations take place, distending and enlarging its blood vessels, irritating it, and finally terminating in inflammation and ulceration.

The Liver is the largest gland of the abdomen, situated immediately below the diaphragm, to which

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it is attached, and is a very torpid inactive organ; it receives a large supply of venous blood, which if thick or viscid, flows into the liver faster than it passes out, and accumulations take place, which enlarges it, and presses up the diaphragm, lessening the capacity of the chest, so that the lungs have not room to expand, producing shortness of breath, phthisis, asthma, and sometimes a choking sensation in the throat, bronchitis, and not unfrequently attended with cough, sore throat, &c. &c.

From the venous blood the ~~venous~~ liver has to manufacture bile, one of the most important fluids in the system; if therefore, the blood be in any way depraved, the production of healthy bile would be impossible. If the bile is thick it would be liable to form calculi in the liver, and sometimes most serious and fatal obstructions in the bile duct. A disease of the liver may extend

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itself to the Kidneys! and terminate in dropsy, or it may irritate and disease the Lungs, and terminate in pneumonia, whichever organ is the weakest would be most liable to become affected.

This state of the disease is frequently termed dyspepsia, and considered a disease very difficult to cure; and one which may exist for years without any ameliation.

Why is it considered as incurable? because it is supposed to be a disease of the stomach, that it originated there.

Authors have endeavoured to lay down causes why the stomach was the primary seat of what they termed dyspepsia.

No medical gentlemen who value his reputation would venture on a denial of the position we have here laid down! although in order to maintain the popular doctrines of

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the profession some may say they differ from us in opinion.

If the views we have here taken be correct and I think they are, they clearly infer that a very different course should be taken to cure the disease from that heretofore adopted, The primary cause of the disease, being wholly attributable to the morbid condition of the blood, it is evident that the blood must be cleansed from that morbid matter which generates disease before a return to health can reasonably be expected.

The enquiry now presents itself; how may we know what the morbid matter is which charges the blood and generates disease?

Physicians, if they will prove successful in their prescriptions, should be chemists, not theoretically and technically, but practically

and perfectly understand animal and vegetable chemistry.

What difficulty could the Physician then have in determining what particular constituent the blood might be charged with which generated and supported disease,

The tongue itself, the instant he saw it would present the evidence to his mind, whether it contained too much lime, carbon, mucous, or other substances, which it should be freed from; and if sufficiently versed in vegetable chemistry, he would as quickly perceive what agent to make use of to expel this morbid matter, from the system, by which the disease would be cured and the Patient restored to comfort and usefulness.

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